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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 12 July 1994, at 3 p.m.

President :

Mr. TEJERA PARIS
(Vice-President)

(Venezuela)

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Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system related to the following theme: (continued)

- (b) International cooperation within the United Nations system against the illicit production, sales, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (continued)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Tejera Paris (Venezuela), Vice-President, took the chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING THEME (continued)
(A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91):

- (b) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AGAINST THE ILLICIT PRODUCTION, SALES, DEMAND, TRAFFIC AND DISTRIBUTION OF NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES (E/1994/58, E/1994/95)

Mr. LINDLEY (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that since the major concern of FAO was with the agricultural sector, it realized that rural development could not be discussed without consideration of the problem of illicit drugs, and it included the issue in many of its plans for future activity. Government interest was a key factor in the extent of FAO involvement in the problem of drug abuse. FAO was particularly interested in remote-sensing and satellite imagery, crop substitution, the appropriate use of herbicides, and educational programmes for young people and adults, particularly programmes examining the relationship between drug abuse and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). In the area of demand reduction, also, the greatest strengths of FAO were in the area of rural development. The mandate for coordination in the field of drug abuse lay with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP); other agencies should act within their own spheres of influence. Cooperation between FAO and UNDCP had been fruitful.

In response to the representative of Austria, he said that FAO had proposed an agenda item for the September meeting of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Drug Abuse Control, which would examine the question of addressing young people as an audience.

Ms. CHAHKAR-FRHANG (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that the representative of Sweden had asked how UNDP could allocate Indicative Planning Figure (IPF) resources to the fight against illicit drugs. As the representative of the United States had remarked, the consequences of trafficking in drugs undermined the very programmes that United Nations agencies were attempting to promote. However, the inverse was also true; development United Nations programmes were the basis of the fight against illicit drugs. From this point of view, all UNDP anti-

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(Ms. Chahkar-Frhang)

poverty programmes were also a means of fighting the drug problem. Coordination and cooperation on the part of all agencies concerned was essential to this project.

During the fifth programming cycle, several programmes had been financed or co-financed with IPF funds with the help of UNDCP and national Governments. Most UNDP activities in the field of drug abuse had been largely financed through the Special Programme Resources Fund, which had been allocated for this purpose during the fifth programming cycle. Those funds, which amounted to US\$ 3.5 million, had provided a catalyst which allowed IPF monies to be allocated to the fight against illicit drugs, particularly in the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Mr. HINESTROSA REY (Colombia) said that UNDCP had a key role to play in coordination and production of the System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Control (SWAP), which must be finalized as soon as possible. A detailed, concrete master plan was a requirement for clarity of financing, coordination and execution at local, national and regional levels. The master plan would also be of use in the modernization of drug information systems and improvement of coordination among United Nations agencies, financial organizations and donor countries under the aegis of UNDCP.

It was important to achieve coordination among Member States and regional organizations; the work of the Inter-American Centre for Training in Public Administration, under the aegis of the Organization of American States, had been particularly useful in that area. There was also a great need for practical and effective activity in planning and coordination. The experience of other countries could be brought to bear on the problem.

Mrs. ESPINOSA (Mexico) expressed pleasure that not only countries, but also United Nations agencies were aware of the seriousness of the drug problem and were willing to work together on coordination. There seemed to be a general consensus that such coordination must take place under the aegis of UNDCP.

She requested clarification of the statement by the Executive Director of UNDCP to the effect that SWAP, in its initial form, had reached the limits of its potential. Noting that coordination activities might originate either with United Nations agencies or with UNDCP, she asked the Executive Director how he intended to proceed with the work of coordination.

It was essential that the drug problem should be included in any consideration of the development process. The question had been treated in various individual

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(Mrs. Espinosa, Mexico)

legal instruments, but had not been globally included in the question of development. She cited the importance of the document that would be produced at the end of the current coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council and hoped that it would be available as soon as possible so that it could be discussed in preparation for the 1995 World Summit for Social Development.

Mr. GIACOMELLI (Executive Director, United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)) said that SWAP had necessarily been a patchwork composed of the sometimes incompatible views of a number of agencies. ACC had decided to deal primarily with the exchange of views on policy and planning and the shared vision of future activities. In the brief time since that decision, results had been modest, but the "bottom-up" focus and greater involvement at the field level seemed to be leading to better coordination.

He agreed with the representative of Austria that the ACC debate to be held in 1995 was a golden opportunity since it meant that, in future, all agencies concerned with the drug problem would meet once a year. In the past, many agencies had not bothered to participate in meetings of ACC in its previous form; at present, however, most agencies did participate.

Ms. MURUGESAN (India) said that she had shared the curiosity of the representative of Austria regarding the mandate of UNDCP outside the United Nations system, but that her delegation was satisfied with the response of the UNDCP representative. She asked him to elaborate on the role and the mandate of the UNDCP Resident Representatives in Member States. Regarding the UNDCP representative's reference to agreements between his organization and Member States, she wondered whether those agreements had made a significant difference in the drug problem. She also wondered whether the focus of those agreements had been on supply and demand reduction, or whether they had been country-specific and related to national plans of the Governments in question.

Mr. GIACOMELLI (Executive Director, United Nations International Drug Control Programme) said that his organization had only a small network of national and regional offices, and it could not limit its work to those areas because of the global nature of the drug problem. It had been decided to use the existing network of UNDP Resident Representatives as UNDCP coordinators, since they were in a privileged position to take action on the basis of existing programmes. That

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(Mr. Giacomelli)

approach had worked well, for example, in Pakistan. But since the Resident Representatives might need to develop their sensitivity to the drug problem, UNDCP had established a mailing list to keep them apprised of discussions of the drug problem in other United Nations bodies. Coordination between UNDP Resident Representatives and UNDCP had been very effective in Central Asia.

At the level of subregional activity, groups of countries frequently shared common problems related to drug abuse, usually along their common borders. It was in their interest to enact compatible legislation and to share information and resources. In southern Latin America, for example, countries frequently had different types of drug problems along different borders. There, the main interest was in matters of law enforcement and customs. Elsewhere, the chief drug-related problem was money laundering; in that case, too, there was room for coordination.

Mr. OTUVELU (Nigeria) said that since no agency had exclusive responsibility in a given area, there were sometimes conflicts on the question of the statutory responsibilities of different agencies. Proper perception and acceptance of the multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach to the drug problem were needed. His delegation recommended discussion and accommodation at both the national and the sectoral level.

It was important to optimize the available resources. Duplication had been a problem in the United Nations system, but there were signs of improvement. At times, however, there was an unwillingness to try new approaches. The Economic and Social Council should recommend that UNDCP and related agencies should find better means of coordination, since the true victims of disputes among agencies were not United Nations bodies, but rather the target populations they hoped to save. Frankness and objectivity were essential to any solution of the drug problem.

Mr. GIACOMELLI (Executive Director, United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)) said that the very fact that the meeting was taking place was very encouraging. The representative of WHO had mentioned that the level of funding by UNDCP for the Programme on Substance Abuse (PSA) had substantially decreased; he would check the situation because, if it was true, it would be of concern to both UNDCP and PSA since it was important that UNDCP funds should be properly used.

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(Mr. Giacomelli)

At the time when PSA had been established, there had been an agreement with WHO that projects should no longer be executed at the country level but that the emphasis should be place on global projects. Through the process of developing and fine tuning its role as watchdog, UNDCP had brought about a tenfold increase in the financial contributions to common activities with WHO over the past three years. Funding levels with other sister organizations had been steadily increasing over that same period. UNDCP had undertaken two evaluations to shed light on its relationship with PSA. One was concerned with the management and the effective use of funds allocated to the financing of activities implemented by PSA, to be completed by September 1994; the other was an evaluation of the demand reduction activities funded by UNDCP; PSA would be fully consulted in the evaluation process and Member States would be informed of the results.

Mr. MAYRHOFER-GRUENBUEHEL (Observer for Austria) drew attention to document E/1994/95 containing a letter from the Chairman of the thirty-seventh session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs addressed to the President, with an annex containing elements for possible consideration by the Council at its coordination segment. Since the annex was primarily addressed to the specialized agencies, he wished to hear their reaction to the document. In addition, the annex should be taken into account when the Council's final document was drafted.

The Executive Director of UNDCP had referred to the importance of the ACC Subcommittee on Drug Abuse Control; Austria agreed that inter-agency meetings could be a very important tool for coordination and synergy if they were well prepared and were attended at the highest possible level; they were the ideal forum for sorting out concerns such as those of the representative of WHO.

The PRESIDENT said that the Council's report would take into account the letter from the Chairman of the thirty-seventh session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Mr. FITSCHEN (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that a number of responses had been given to the question he had asked at the previous meeting; he sought the views of the international financial institutions as well.

He requested the Executive Director of UNDCP to elaborate on the "bottom-up" approach and on the relationship between it and the System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Control (SWAP); he asked whether there were indications that the "bottom-up" approach

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(Mr. Fitschen, Germany)

was as successful as SWAP and whether the reactions of UNDCP field representatives were encouraging.

Mr. GIACOMELLI (Executive Director, United Nations International Drug Control Programme) said that the "bottom-up" approach was not an alternative to SWAP but would inject an essential element into it. At the field level, it was hoped that input would be received in the form of project proposals, in consultation with local representatives of specialized agencies and regional institutions. Field staff would need to be instructed to engage in cooperation and coordination. The master plan could play a very important role in that respect. The intention of the master plan was to involve all interested parties, although the initiative lay with the country concerned; that approach encouraged countries to develop coordination.

Mr. EMBLAD (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that he agreed that much more could be done to develop cooperation between WHO and UNDCP. WHO welcomed the current debate as a very constructive recognition of what needed to be done.

Mr. AL-MUAKKAF (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the drug problem was as dangerous as the nuclear threat. The proliferation of narcotic drugs was becoming a threat to world peace and security and was paralysing entire sections of society, especially young people, it was one of the causes of backwardness in some countries.

In the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, there were no serious problem of illicit drug production or use, but its geographical position made it a transit country. His Government had taken steps to punish drug traffickers and had included drug-related provisions in measures in the field of health, education and training. It had entered into agreements with neighbouring countries and also had arrangements to exchange information with the International Criminal Police Organization and with the International Narcotics Control Board; it was a party to United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol.

The international community needed to work together in solidarity to combat drugs. Cooperation was needed to combat the demand and supply for drugs, as well as drug trafficking and drug abuse. The United Nations had a vital role to play in that area; coordination between the various agencies involved must be improved.

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Mr. BOUCHER (World Bank) said that in paragraph 42 of the report of the Secretary-General (E/1994/58), it was stated that the role of international financial institutions in United Nations system-wide activities had as yet been limited. That was true of the World Bank, not because of any lack of seriousness in its assessment of the drug problem but because of what Governments themselves wanted the World Bank to do. As a lender, the World Bank could only assist Governments in their borrowing programmes to address the problem. The traditional focus had been in the area of agriculture and rural development, in which the World Bank had a comparative advantage in terms of its lending programmes in support of crop substitution programmes. However, a number of crop substitution projects supported by the World Bank had been unsuccessful; it was difficult to provide incentives for crop substitution when the profit to be made on drug crops was so great. Moreover, drug crops were hardy and adaptable and often required little skill to cultivate.

In recent years, the World Bank had focused more on the macroeconomic dimensions of the drug economy. After consultations with UNDCP, it had offered to exchange analytical work relating to the macroeconomic dimensions of the drug problem and implications for government policy. With the consent of the Government concerned, the World Bank would invite UNDCP to discuss the drug problem in its broader dimension, in its consultative groups. The World Bank would endeavour to make its analytical reports available to the system at large.

Demand was just as important as supply; the fight needed to be fought on all fronts simultaneously.

Mr. GIACOMELLI (Executive Director, United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)) said that UNDCP welcomed the World Bank's availability. In specific cases, UNDCP and the World Bank had already worked together, for example in a study of the socio-economic impact of opium cultivation in Pakistan; UNDCP had an understanding with the World Bank to undertake similar studies in other countries.

While everyone was aware of the difficulty of competing with the income which peasants could obtain from illicit crops, the point was to combine incentives with the implementation of legislation, in line with the relevant conventions. Peasants could even accept a reduction in income if there was a guarantee of improvement in the social, health and educational conditions of the community and a market existed for alternative products.

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Mr. SPIRO (United States of America) said that it was clear that in order to solve the drug problem, coordination and cooperation was needed on the part of the whole system, involving international financial institutions, local governments and other parties.

The point made by the representative of Colombia was very important; when representatives attended meetings of different agencies, they should do what they could to persuade agencies to focus more effectively on the drug problem.

The PRESIDENT asked what kind of crops could replace drug crops.

Mr. GIACOMELLI (Executive Director, United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)) said that that depended on location, soil quality and climate. In southern China, along the frontier with Myanmar, there were rubber plantations which could yield three times as much profit as opium; it took seven years for rubber trees to mature, and in the transitional stage sugar cane and food crops were grown. Although there had been some resumption of poppy cultivation, there was a great demand for rubber for the manufacture of condoms because of the problem of AIDS.

Elsewhere in the world, FAO could help in identifying alternative crops. A dialogue was needed with sister organizations to ensure that the drug element was included as an integral part of their projects and programmes in different countries.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.